

## **WISCONSIN'S HOMELESS SHELTER AND SERVICES PROGRAMS**

Since 1985, the State of Wisconsin has had a commitment to assisting homeless individuals and families. A variety of funding mechanisms administered by the Division of Housing and Community Development provide funds to local agencies for emergency, transitional and permanent shelter and services for homeless persons. The state distributes these funds through a variety of decentralized approaches using formula and competitive application processes. Local sponsors then have the opportunity to respond to the specific needs of their communities.

Homeless programs administered by the Division of Housing and Community Development include:

### **State Shelter Subsidy Grant Program**

This program provides up to 50% of an emergency shelter program's annual operating budget. Eligible applicants are a county or municipal governing body or agency, for profit entities, an Indian tribal government, a community action agency, or other private non-profit organization. Only generic emergency facilities and voucher programs for homeless persons are eligible. The state's annual general-purpose revenue (GPR) appropriation for this program is \$1,131,000.

### **Emergency Shelter Grant Program (ESG)**

Funding authorized by HUD under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, ESG funds may be used for homeless prevention activities and essential services, renovation and rehabilitation of shelter facilities and shelter operating costs. The shelter programs may include shelters for victims of domestic violence, runaway adolescents, persons with disabilities as well as generic shelter and transitional housing programs. Any city, county, or private non-profit may apply for and receive some of the 1.9 million in annual funding for its homeless shelter or transitional housing program.

### **Transitional Housing Program**

This program funds a variety of mechanisms that will help a formerly homeless person or family achieve real, lasting economic independence. Funds may be used for housing costs, childcare, educational or vocational training, transportation, or other costs needed to assist the transitional housing participant in attaining self-sufficiency. Eligible applicants are government or private non-profit organizations that currently operate transitional housing and support service programs. The State appropriates \$375,000 a year for this program and funding is combined with ESG funds.

### **Interest Bearing Real Estate Trust Account Program (IBRETA)**

Since 1993 a law requires real estate brokers to establish interest-bearing real estate trust accounts for the deposit of all down payments, earnest money and other trust funds received by the broker and related to the conveyance of real estate. The interest from the IBRETA accounts are remitted to the State and approximately \$200,000 to \$300,000 is remitted annually. The proceeds are used to make grants to organizations that provide shelter or services to homeless individuals or families. The Division augments the existing emergency and transitional homeless programs with these funds.

### **HUD Continuum of Care Supportive Housing Program**

Beginning in 1997 the Bureau of Housing has participated in the HUD Continuum of Care Supportive Housing program. The proposals submitted each year have garnered from \$3.6 million to \$5.7 million in grant funds to support a wide variety of transitional and permanent housing and supportive service programs for homeless persons across the state. The funds originate from a national HUD competition and the grant proposal covers 69 counties. The Division of Housing and Community Development's application process is coordinated with the Wisconsin Association of Community Action Programs (WISCAP); the Department of Health and Family Services, and the WI Department of Veterans Affairs as well as hundreds of local organizations.

**Projects for Assistance in the Transition from Homelessness (PATH)** funds services for individuals with serious mental illness, or with co-occurring substance abuse disorders, who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. PATH funds outreach, mental health and substance abuse services, and case management, and assists people in accessing housing, primary health care and job training. Eligible applicants are government or non-profit organizations that provide services in an area with a population of more than 150,000. PATH is funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, a component of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. WI receives about \$700,000 per year.

#### **Wisconsin ServicePoint**

Wisconsin ServicePoint (WISP) is a web-enhanced database software program implemented to better understand the scope of homelessness in Wisconsin, to improve service delivery to homeless persons, and to evaluate the effectiveness of service interventions. The site became available in 2001 we have more than 700 users working at 140 partner agencies who have created more than 130,000 client records.

#### **WIFrontDoor**

WIFrontDoor is a web-based resource database program that is available to anyone who has access to the Internet. The site is divided into two major components: a centralized collection of social service agency and program information and a listing of affordable housing units available throughout Wisconsin. The web site became active January 2005 and can be found at: [www.wifrontdoor.org](http://www.wifrontdoor.org) and [www.wifrontdoorhousing.org](http://www.wifrontdoorhousing.org). Questions about WIFrontDoor should be sent to [fdhelp@commerce.state.wi.us](mailto:fdhelp@commerce.state.wi.us)

#### **Funds for homeless shelter and services may also be available from the following sources:**

- Community Development Block Grants administered by state or local CDBG Offices
- Housing Organization and Direct Assistance Program (HODAP)
- Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME)
- WHEDA Foundation Grant Program
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago

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